

# **SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY CHILDREN'S NETWORK**

## **Policy Council Minutes July 23, 2003**

### **Members/Representatives Present:**

- Brian Pickering, HSS Legislation & Research
- Charles Adams, Jr., Community Services Department
- Susan Melanson, Children's Network
- Claudia Spencer, Department of Public Health
- Kathy Watkins, HSS Legislation & Research
- Jim Felten, Department of Public Health
- Rebecca Stafford, Children's Fund
- Mary Lynn Clark, Inland Regional Center
- Narciso Cardona, SBCUSD
- Eric Frykman, M.D. – Department of Public Health
- Mandi Batalo, SB County Library
- Andrew Gruchy, Department of Behavioral Health
- Ray Wingerd, Probation
- Gerald Farber, Public Defender
- Jane Lawrence, Public Defender
- Karen Bell, DA – Juvenile
- Joyce Lewis, Department of Behavioral Health
- Cathy Cimbalo, Director of Department of Children's Services
- Carol Anselmi, HSS Administration
- Honorable Rex Victor
- Bruce Davis, 3<sup>rd</sup> District Board of Supervisors Representative
- Ed Rowe, Children's Network
- Kent Paxton, Children's Network Officer
- Tammy Williams, Children's Network

The meeting of the Children's Network Policy Council was called to order at 12:10 p.m. and convened by Judge Rex Victor in the Citrus Room, fifth floor, County Government Center.

### **1.0 Welcome and Introductions**

Judge Rex Victor welcomed those present and self-introductions were made.

## **2.0 Approval of Agenda**

Kent Paxton asked that the agenda item 4.3 (New Day Center Group Home: Action requested to forward a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors for a letter of support for the New Day Center Group Home) be removed. A motion was made to accept the agenda as written with the deletion of 4.3.

## **3.0 Approval of June Minutes**

The June 25, 2003 minutes were approved as submitted.

## **4.0 Discussion/Action Items**

### **4.1 Safe and Stable Families Contracts: Action requested to forward the Safe and Stable Families Contract recommendations to the Board of Supervisors**

Cathy Cimbalo reported: The state is changing the funding. The contracts were on the Federal fiscal year, but will be changing to the State fiscal year of October 1, 2003 to June 30, 2004. Cathy referred everyone to their agenda packets that list the current contractors and a copy of a state letter. Three contractors not getting renewal are: High Desert Youth Center had difficulty getting services off the ground; DOVES Domestic Violence Shelter has other sources for funding; and Department of Public Health – H.O.P.E. Program cost is too expensive for number of clients served. Cathy mentioned she had to make some cuts due to a cut in their hard goods and services budget through the Department of Children's Services. Cathy mentioned some allocated funds were saved in anticipation of a state budget and possibly further cuts. Judge Rex Victor asked how does the state budget and change in fiscal year affect the funding? Cathy explained the funding is primarily federal with no county match, except it passes through the state coffers. The RFP process will now have to begin either June 1 or July 1 if the funding cycle is June to June. Kathy Watkins mentioned she saw a document on her desk that stated the federal government has already reauthorized the program. **Action: A motion was made to move the recommendation to the Board of Supervisors for approval of the Safe and Stable Families Contracts for 2003 and 2004, with the note it will only cover 75% of the year.**

**4.2 Group Home Needs Assessment: Action requested to forward the Annual 2003 Group Home Needs Assessment to the Board of Supervisors**

Brian Pickering referred everyone to the charts and executive summary in their packets. The executive summary was handed out at the meeting in June. The purpose was to survey placement staff from; Department of Children's Services, Department of Behavioral Health, and the Probation Department. Group Home providers and other community members were surveyed as well. Another purpose was to identify gaps in services and to analyze why there are so many out-of-county placements. The report next year will have a clearer breakdown of group home providers and placement departments. Kathy Watkins and Kelly Cross presented the document recently at a national meeting and it was well received by the audience.

Kathy Watkins mentioned: From the Board of Supervisors perspective there are currently 994 beds in this county with the three departments placing a little over 700 children. Kathy also raised the question why are 48% of the children placed out of San Bernardino County, when the numbers show there are enough beds? The placement workers have to travel out of the county once a month to visit the children in their placements, which becomes a considerable time factor. The stats show there are children placed from other counties in San Bernardino County group homes sometimes due to cost factors. It was noted from the charts that there has been a considerable change in placements by the Probation staff. The report next year will list San Bernardino and Riverside counties as the same economic placement area.

Kent Paxton reported the main function of the study is to reduce out-of-county placements and provide an executive summary to the Board of Supervisors. The study pinpoints the needs and sets a baseline for Board items on Group Home Letters of Support . Bruce Davis mentioned the report was a great job and does address other issues. Bruce reported that he has contacted CCL (Community Care Licensing) to see how many complaint calls have been registered on group homes in San Bernardino County. There appears to be a discrepancy in the reports of calls to CCL and what the County reports. Kent mentioned that the Southern Placement Committee meets regularly and this county takes concerns to that group. Bruce wondered how we could get the licensing requirements strengthened especially for group homes that underreport incidences; by legislation and if a tracking devise could be developed?

Kent mentioned that the county does have a group home hold list for group homes that continue to have problems. Carol Anselmi mentioned that the State has already cut the number of Licensing staff that responds to problems and there may be further cuts due to the state budget crisis. Kathy Watkins mentioned she has contacted the local CCL office and asked to come in and review records, which did not happen due to various barriers. Kathy mentioned it might be more effective for us to approach the matter through legislation. **Kathy agreed to bring to the September meeting a platform to develop for probable legislation. Action: A motion was made to forward the 2003 Group Home Needs Assessment to the Board of Supervisors for approval.**

## **5.0 Information Items**

### **5.1 Children's Fund Report**

Rebecca Stafford reported for Children's Fund. Yesterday Children's Fund had their Board Retreat. The 2002-2003 year has been a stellar year with gross revenue of \$2,655,518 up 5% from 2001-2002. In cash they were able to raise \$1,030,627, in-kind gifts of \$994,959 and grants of \$629,932. They were able to handle 33% increase in referrals. Children's Fund doubled the funding for living expenses. Overall, they expended \$1,881,895 in resources both cash and in-kind to the community. Children's Fund served 48,315 children in this county, which is a 31% increase over last year. This year there was some money left over for special projects, and the board is reviewing some recommendations. For instance some funding might be given for the new juvenile dependency court. Children's Fund staff is very much appreciated in getting services and goods to the children in need of this county.

### **5.2 Perinatal Plan**

Kent Paxton reported that the Policy Council set a priority to work on a program addressing perinatal substance abuse. Kent mentioned that a core team was formed and went to a workshop presented by Dr. Ira Chasnoff a national expert on perinatal substance abuse. Kent referred everyone to his or her agenda packets with further details. The materials in your agenda packets show the start of the core teams' work. A finished product will be presented to this group. The last page in the agenda packets lists the action plan goals. One of the goals is to have the assessment tools for the OB/GYN doctors to use for screening possible substance abuse. Kent and Dr. Hage met with IEHP staff about the possible purchase of the 4 p's to be used as an excellent screening tool.

Dr. Ira Chasnoff recommended this tool. IEHP has decided to purchase the tool for providers to use for screening purposes. The current Perinatal program in San Bernardino County has a heavy emphasis on residential care, so there will now be more of a focus on outpatient treatment. They will also focus on educational groups for the pregnant. Down the road the SART (Screening, assessment, referral and treatment) system will be developed for children who have been exposed to substance abuse. A data tracking system will be developed to measure the outcomes of treatment. Kent mentioned that March of Dimes has been doing great work with the funding they received from First 5 San Bernardino and they have a staff person whom is a core team member as well. Dr. Bruce Smith has been chosen to be the core team leader and contact person for San Bernardino County.

Judge Rex Victor is also a core team member and sees the value of the system to be very cost effective in terms of budgets and the very positive impact of getting assessments and treatments provided much earlier. Claudia Spencer mentioned that perinatal substance abuse is a very difficult problem in this county and the data so far supports this new approach. Judge Rex Victor mentioned that the law and lawyers could be an instrument for change with this next system of care. **Kathy Watkins mentioned that the CAPIT (child abuse intervention treatment) funds have been reauthorized by the Federal government and has some perinatal screening language written into it. Kathy will share a copy.** This document might assist in leverage to getting hospital personnel to identify perinatal substance abuse on a more frequent basis.

## **6.0 Other**

Kent Paxton announced that Jane Lawrence is retiring as of August 8<sup>th</sup> and was offered congratulations. This group will miss Jane for all her hard work and collaboration on children's issues. Jane mentioned she will miss working with this professional group and sees the value of collaboration to make social changes beyond the criminal justice field she works in.

## **7.0 Public Comment**

No comment. Meeting adjourned.

Children's Network Policy Council  
July 23, 2003

**8.0 Next Meeting will be: September 24, 2003.**

*Will go dark in August*

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Tammy Williams, Children's Network  
Policy Council Recording Secretary**

**/tgw**